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Resumed first regular session of 1991

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 21 June 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden)
(Vice-President)

CONTENTS

Narcotic drugs (continued)

Elections (continued)

Closure of the session

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (E/1991/11, E/1991/24 and E/1991/103)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the 11 draft resolutions and one draft decision which the Second (Social) Committee recommended for adoption in paragraphs 23 and 24 of its report (E/1991/103).

Draft resolutions I, II and IV to X

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider draft resolutions I, II and IV to X, the text of which appeared in chapter I of document E/1991/24.

Draft resolutions I, II and IV to X were adopted.

Draft resolutions XI and XII

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider draft resolutions XI and XII, the texts of which appeared in paragraph 23 of document E/1991/103.

Ms. TERANISHI (Japan) said that her delegation would have liked to have been a sponsor of draft resolutions XI and XII, but had been unable to do so for lack of time. In that connection, she stressed the need to abide by rule 54 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council. Delegations should be given sufficient time to receive instructions from their Governments on questions under consideration.

Draft resolutions XI and XII were adopted.

Draft decision I

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider draft decision I, the text of which appeared in paragraph 24 of document E/1991/103.

Draft decision I was adopted.

The meeting was suspended at 3.50 p.m. and resumed at 5.10 p.m.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to document E/1991/103/Add.1, containing Part II of the report of the Second (Social) Committee, and invited the Council to consider draft resolution III entitled

(The President)

"Enlargement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs", which was contained in paragraph 8 of that document, while its programme budget implications were indicated in paragraph 4 of the document.

Mr. FEYDER (Observer for Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, noted that a draft resolution on the enlargement of the Commission had been adopted by consensus in Vienna, where it had been sponsored by 59 States, representing all geographical groups of the United Nations. The result of intense negotiations, the draft resolution adopted in Vienna had reflected general agreement on how the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should be enlarged. As the Commission played a very vital role at the international level, qualitative criteria must also be considered in the enlargement process.

The Twelve deeply regretted that many of the draft resolution's sponsors in Vienna no longer felt able to support it. The amendment that had been submitted to draft resolution III had many positive aspects, and in a spirit of compromise, the Twelve had not opposed it. The Twelve believed that it would be extremely dangerous to politicize the work of the Commission. They wished to emphasize that any enlargement of the Commission must be supported by the largest possible majority of Member States and take into account the interests of all regional groups of the United Nations, including those of the major donor countries.

Mr. KOTEY (Observer for Ghana), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Group of 77, expressed appreciation to all regional groups for participating in the extensive informal consultations which had resulted in the draft resolution now before the Council. The Group of 77 wished to clarify that it had introduced amendments to the draft resolution in the conviction that enlargement of the Commission should redress current imbalances in geographical representation. In no way were those amendments intended to politicize the issue of enlargement, which the Group of 77 supported. Rather, they were aimed at improving the participation of underrepresented groups in the Commission. Equitable geographical representation was a principle recognized in the Charter of the United Nations and other international organizations. Accordingly, the Group of 77 had

(Mr. Kotey, Observer, Ghana)

proposed that the additional seats gained from enlargement of the Commission should be allocated to underrepresented regional groups, namely, the Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and African States.

The Commission had been enlarged four times since its establishment. The most recent enlargement, by 40 seats, which had taken place in 1983, had not taken into account the interests of those regions which had joined the Commission after its establishment. As a result, the Group of Western European and other States, whose 24 Member States represented 15.3 per cent of the membership of the United Nations, held 13, or 32.5 per cent, of the seats on the Commission. The Eastern European Group, whose 10 Member States represented 6.4 per cent of the membership of the United Nations, held five, or 12.5 per cent of the seats. By contrast, the African Group, whose 51 Member States represented 32.5 per cent of the membership of the United Nations, held only 7, or 17.5 per cent of the seats on the Commission. The pattern was repeated in the case of the Asian and Latin American and Caribbean Groups. The Group of 77 had remained flexible throughout the consultations on the enlargement of the Commission. It had done so in the belief that such an important resolution must enjoy unanimous support and out of a desire to show its willingness to cooperate with other regional groups in the Council. The Group of 77 hoped that the spirit of conciliation and understanding it had shown would be reciprocated in the future.

Draft resolution III on the enlargement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was adopted.

Ms. COOMBS (New Zealand), speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, said that they had supported the enlargement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in recognition of the need for greater international cooperation in the fight against drug abuse, and of the fact that the international drug situation and the membership of the United Nations had changed significantly since the Commission's establishment. The three countries had been sponsors of the Vienna resolution. They had worked hard to achieve consensus on the enlargement of the Commission both in Vienna and at the current session. They could have supported many of the proposals put forward in the past few days, and were pleased that one had finally proved agreeable to all members of the Council.

Ms. OJAMAA (United States of America) said that, in the interest of furthering the work of the Council and international cooperation in combating the scourge of drugs, her delegation had not objected to adoption of the resolution without a vote. It was none the less very disappointing and puzzling that the Council could not adopt the proposal recommended by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. As it had stated in the general debate on agenda item 10, her delegation believed that the Council should have affirmed its confidence in a proposal which had been sponsored by 59 Member States and observers at the Commission's thirty-fourth session and adopted without a vote. That proposal had been negotiated fully, taking into account the interests and concerns of all regions and the specific mandate of the Commission.

Mr. DUHS (Sweden), speaking on behalf of Finland and Sweden, the Nordic members of the Council, noted that at recent sessions the Council had decided to enlarge various subsidiary bodies. In 1990, it had decided on the enlargement of the Commission on Human Rights by 10 members; at the current session, it had decided on the enlargement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Finnish and Swedish delegations were pleased to note that, despite certain difficulties, the resolution on that enlargement had been adopted without a vote. Consensus within the Council on the size and composition of subsidiary bodies was vital to the proper functioning of those bodies.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to paragraph 9 of document E/1991/103/Add.1, in which the Second (Social) Committee had recommended adoption of draft decision II. In that draft decision, the Council was invited to take note of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its thirty-fourth session (E/1991/24).

Draft decision II was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the Council had concluded its consideration of agenda item 10.

ELECTIONS (continued)

Commission on Human Settlements

The PRESIDENT announced that the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States had informed the Secretariat that it supported the candidacy

(The President)

of Bulgaria for the vacancy which had occurred, for a four-year term, beginning on 1 January 1992.

There being no other candidates, Bulgaria was elected by acclamation.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The President declared closed the first regular session of 1991 of the Economic and Social Council.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.